

Oneota Slopes

We have always managed the Christmas trees as we manage the rest of the farm - as sustainably as possible. We started by converting a gullied hillside field into trees in 1975. Each year we plant the first half of April, shear the trees by hand with shearing knives in June, and harvest just before delivery. We have beautiful scotch, white, and red pine, and many short-needled spruce and fir coming along!



(Trees with prairie and garden in front)

Oneota Slopes is ...

Pat and Paul Johnson (1st generation)
Emily and Andy Johnson (2nd generation)
and Helen and Leila - brochure cover
(3rd generation!)

Questions? Contact Pat at 563.382.3829
or trees@oneotaslopes.org

If you're ever down Decorah way, come cut
your own tree at our choose 'n cut operation!

How are we different?

At The Typical Large Tree Farm

- ♦ Trees are cut weeks ahead of delivery, resulting in **dry trees**, needle-drop, and even fire hazards. Pines are usually spray painted green the fall before sale.
- ♦ Large fields of single species are planted, resulting in pest outbreaks and **extensive spraying** of insecticides and fungicides. Large quantities of herbicides are broadcast sprayed, leaving little ground cover or room for other life.
- ♦ Management practices are often extremely **detrimental to biodiversity**. The fields are sterile monocultures that have little wildlife or biodiversity present.
- ♦ Thousands of trees are produced from **large factory farms**. In fact, many trees even here in the Midwest are shipped in from the Northwest or the Southeast!



At Oneota Slopes

- ♦ Barring weather problems, we cut just before delivery, and bring **FRESH TREES EVERY TIME**. We have never painted a tree, and do not plan to do so.
- ♦ We work hard to **RAISE OUR TREES SUSTAINABLY**. We currently plant in mixed species areas and have never used insecticides or fungicides. The only herbicides we use are spot treatments of woody invasives we cannot control with limited mowing.
- ♦ We manage our entire farm (and especially the tree farm) for **NATIVE BIODIVERSITY**
- ♦ We are a true **SMALL, FAMILY FARM**. We many trees locally and the rest within a 3 hour drive. The trees are just part of a diversified farm.



Healthy Trees and a Healthy Land Community

Because we do not broadcast spray for pests or weeds, or manicure our farm, it is filled with much more wildlife than the typical tree farm.

Mourning doves, chipping (right) and field sparrows, bobolinks, cedar waxwings, and other birds make their home there. Wildflowers such as black-eyed susans (below), prairie rose, potentilla, cone-flowers, and daisies abound. Voles burrow



through the ground cover, and coyote make dens on the hillside. Does this affect the trees?

Absolutely. The competition (and field mice) take their toll on our seedlings every year, and our trees take an average of 10 years to reach harvest. But they turn out as beautiful as any around, and the ecological benefits are worth the work. We hope you agree!

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Fresh Trees are Worth It!

Real Christmas trees have been given a poor reputation as fire hazards and needle droppers thanks to the factory farms that cut trees weeks ahead and ship dry, painted trees to the cities. We do not paint our trees green, and we cut just before delivery. Any yellowish cast to your tree (called winter-burn) ought to green up when indoors with water, and the tree should stay fresh and flame-resistant through the holiday season. Keep your tree in water!

Tree Care in Your Home

- ♦ Cut an inch or two off the stem.
- ♦ Mount immediately in a large capacity water-holding stand, and fill it up.
- ♦ Keep that stand full of water! A fresh tree can drink a half-gallon or more per day at first. It will taper off but still remain fresh.
- ♦ Place the tree away from heat sources.
- ♦ Check the tree lights for frayed cords or broken sockets.
- ♦ Turn tree lights off when leaving the house or retiring for the night.
- ♦ After the holidays, set your tree outside and enjoy as bird habitat or feeder.



Oneota Slopes Christmas Tree Farm



- ♦ FRESH
- ♦ LOCAL/REGIONAL
- ♦ SUSTAINABLY GROWN

from Decorah, Iowa